

OPUS DE JAZZ

By BEN S. PAGE

Jazz, College, And Brubeck

Jazz critics in most quarters are still speculating publicly as to what course Modern American Jazz would have taken had it never "gone to college" at all. It seems, now, that jazz and college (like oil and water) are difficult, if not impossible, to mix.

Some of the more perceptive of the jazz writers and listeners; and, indeed, even a handful of performing jazz musicians themselves have ventured to say (but only recently) that jazz as a separate, whole art form has been damaged quite extensively from having visited the college campus in the first place, and that jazz will probably not soon (if ever) recover from the glaring wounds suffered at the hands of the young college set.

We, as an avid follower of good jazz, are inclined to agree with those who espouse this logical and sound philosophy and we must also add (at the expense of offending a certain group) that one Mr. Dave Brubeck, who was probably responsible for "college jazz" in the first place, should be held responsible - or at least to a reasonable degree held liable to sharp criticism.

It somehow occurs to me now (although it never did before) that the average college student is not sufficiently orientated with reference to what is "good" and what is "not good" (as pertains to jazz) to be left with the adult responsibility of seeing to it that jazz as a legitimate, valuable music does not become a part of what is "fashionable" or otherwise "progressive" on the college campus in terms of musical interests and appreciation. And perhaps this is the point at which jazz as a whole left itself wide open to the savage, undisciplined whims of the college student in general. This, too, is perhaps where Dave Brubeck and "college jazz" enter the picture, simultaneously.

When Dave Brubeck first left his native Oakland, California to assault the various college campuses with his romping, unchecked brand of piano artistry (via his "Jazz Goes To College" album), he was virtually an unknown except in and around Oakland. He was then referred

to as another of those "West Coast" guys; and he was, like many others of his contemporaries, only seeking his place in the sun as a new and unique musical force on the jazz horizon. Concern at the time of his beginning, therefore, was relatively unintense since followers of really good jazz expected that Dave would be back in Oakland after a couple of seasons, playing local gigs again. Dave's style, they said, was much too clumpy and off-color to amount to anything. He was not much more than a "rage-of-the-moment" pianist, they also said, who couldn't possibly last.

However, Dave's album ("Jazz Goes To College") caught on like wildfire all over and he, in turn, soon became some sort of American institution - like Marian Anderson and "My Fair Lady" - and one was considered somewhat of a crackpot if he was a college student and didn't dig this new piano stylist.

As soon as Brubeck's financial returns from the album started to pour in and some of the hungrier musicians saw that Dave was eating pretty regularly, other jazz musicians started off on the "college jazz" kick and Lee Konitz, another West Coast Saxophonist, issued forth an album called: "Jazz At Harvard Square." By this time, however, Brubeck had already claimed his majority among the young college set and Konitz' album realized its best sales at Harvard University itself. But notwithstanding, jazz was then duly taken to graduate school and post-graduate school. And even after all of the "college jazz" albums had been accounted for, a jazz musician was heard to approach a recording executive with the inevitable question: "Wouldn't it be lovely, sir, if jazz went on further to college and got its Ph.D.?"

Time has already proven, though, that the Dave Brubeck of "Jazz Goes To College" fame is not so much in demand now as he once was. He has faded steadily into the background of jazz music to the extent that he is mildly considered to have been merely a part of a phase - a relatively un-important phase (Continued on Page 8)

Senior Profile

By Sheryl Schooler

Jerome Dudley, a native of Asheville, meets all the requirements of a well rounded student. Worthy, dynamic, and effective is he, the chosen Senior of the Month.

Unanimously elected to the highest student post, the 21 year old commerce major is president of North Carolina College's Student Government Association for 1958-59.

Over a period of three years, Dudley maintained a B average and has held prominent positions in many organizations at this institution.

President of his freshman and sophomore classes, Dudley last year served as the Student Government's vice president.

Besides being a member of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, he also served on the Concert and Lecture Committee.

When asked his prime interest in dealing with students for the current school year, Dudley stated, "I'm interested in working very hard to elevate the school spirit, the cultural tone of our students and to arouse the intellectual curiosity of our students."

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